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U.S. v. Manssor Arbabsiar, Gholam Shakuri Prepared Remarks of U.S. Attorney Preet Bharara October 11, 2011

Good afternoon. As has been described, the complaint unsealed today reveals a well-funded and pernicious plot that had, as its first priority, the assassination of the Saudi Ambassador to the United States.

The details of that murder plot are chilling, to say the least – as the defendants allegedly had no care or concern about inflicting mass casualties on innocent Americans on American soil, in furtherance of their assassination plan.

For example, as set forth in the Complaint, when the confidential source noted that there could be 100 or 150 people in the fictional restaurant where the requested bombing would take place, including possibly members of the United States Congress, the lead defendant – acting on behalf of a component of the Government of Iran – said “no problem” and “no big deal.”

And, as we allege, the defendants showed that they were more than ready, willing, and able to carry out their plan by, among other things, causing \$100,000 to be wired through a New York bank as a deadly down payment for their hired gun.

And it did not stop there. The Saudi ambassador’s assassination was allegedly intended to be merely the opening act in a series of lethal attacks cooked up by the defendants and their cohorts in Iran.

I want to thank all the partners responsible for unraveling this plot before it ever even got off the ground. Our work is the product of a collaborative effort among intelligence and law enforcement agencies that share an unflagging commitment to keeping Americans safe, both at home and abroad, and protecting representatives of foreign governments while they are guests in our country.

I want to commend Director Mueller and the FBI for its outstanding work on this unprecedented and very much ongoing investigation – specifically the Houston FBI office for its tremendous work and also the New York Joint Terrorism Task Force, and our partner in so many cases, Janice Fedarczyk the Assistant Director –in–Charge of the New York Field office of the FBI and her entire team.

I commend Administrator Leonhardt and the Houston office of the DEA for their critically important role in this investigation.

I want to thank the Attorney General and his staff, Assistant Attorney General Lisa Monaco and our close colleagues at the National Security Division for their tremendous leadership and support.

And finally, I want to acknowledge the dedicated career prosecutors from my office in the Southern District of New York: Glen Kopp and Edward Kim, along with their supervisors Michael Farbiarz and Jocelyn Strauber; Deputy U.S. Attorney Richard Zabel; and the Acting Chief of the Criminal Division Jonathan Kolodner.

None of these people has gotten much sleep lately, and we are all safer because of it.

Today’s charges should make crystal clear that we will not let other countries use our soil as their battleground.

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